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Disaster News

ALABAMA FEDERAL ASSISTANCE DECLARATION EXPANDED

Six Counties Qualify for Individual Assistance; Three for Public Assistance

ATLANTA. – The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is expanding the federal aid available in Alabama associated with severe storms and tornadoes that struck March 1, 2007. Six counties now qualify for Individual Assistance and three for Public Assistance. Federal funding is also available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide.

Individual Assistance

The initial declaration on March 3, which authorized Individual Assistance for only Coffee County, now has been expanded to include five more counties: Dale, Dallas, Henry, Montgomery and Wilcox.

Individuals in those counties are urged to register for assistance right away by calling toll-free **(800) 621-FEMA (3362)** or **TTY (800) 462-7585**. They also may register online at **www.FEMA.gov**.

The disaster programs available include temporary housing, disaster unemployment and grants for serious needs and necessary expenses not met by insurance or other programs. In addition, residents and business owners may also be eligible for low-interest loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to help cover losses not fully covered by insurance.

Public Assistance

In addition, the following three counties now qualify for Public Assistance: Coffee, Henry and Wilcox. The three affected counties can apply for Public Assistance for emergency protective measures and debris removal, as well as repairs to:

- Roads and bridges
- Water control facilities
- Buildings and equipment
- Utilities
- Parks/recreational facilities

(MORE)

Under the federal disaster declaration, state and affected local governments receive a minimum 75 percent of the approved costs for debris removal, emergency services related to the disaster, and the restoration of damaged public facilities. Certain private, nonprofit organizations may be eligible for assistance as well.

Mitigation

Federal funding from the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program is also available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide.

Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, economic status or retaliation. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, you should call FEMA toll-free at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or contact your State Office of Equal Rights. If suspicious of any abuse of FEMA programs, please contact the fraud hotline at 1-800-323-8603.

FEMA's temporary housing assistance and grants for public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan. However, applicants who receive SBA loan applications must submit them to SBA loan officers to be eligible for assistance that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses.

FEMA manages federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident, initiates mitigation activities and manages the National Flood Insurance Program. FEMA works closely with state and local emergency managers, law enforcement personnel, firefighters and other first responders. FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003.

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Editors: For more information on Alabama disaster recovery, visit www.fema.gov or ema.alabama.gov